(b) No, Sir.

(c) and (d) Do not arise in view of (a) & (b) above.

Upgradation of Basic Telecom Structure in Rural Areas

1932. SHRIMATI VANGA GEETHA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether rural telephone services in the country are in shambles; and

(b) the action taken to upgrade the basic telecom structure in rural areas?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN): (a) No, Sir. At present, rural telephone services in the country are working satisfactorily. However, some problems are faced in certain areas due to reasons such as: erratic power supply, inadequate road infrastructure in rural areas, law and order problem in States and natural calamities like floods, cyclones etc.

(b) Following steps are taken in a phased manner to further upgrade basic telecom services in rural areas:

(i) Rehabilitation/upgradation of external plant.

(ii) Replacement of long spans of overhead alignment by underground cables.

(iii) Replacement of life expired telephone instruments.

(iv) Introduction of modern technologies like Wireless in Local Loop, Time Division multiple Access/Point to Multi Point (TDMA/PMP), Satellite in rural areas.

(v) Replacement of existing battery sets by maintenance free battery sets and provision of generator sets to take care of long duration of power break down.

(vi) Computerisation of more and more fault repair centres.

(vii) Provision of centralised fault booking services at all SDCC level,

(viii) More and more RLUs are inducted in the network to reduce the cable length.

(ix) Replacement of existing transmission media by OFC.

Unused Telecom Equipments

1933. SHRI MURLI DEORA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government purchased telecom equipments worth rupees more than 100 crore which is lying unused;

(b) whether the orders were placed without any justification and faulty equipments were purchased and no quality test was conducted;

(c) whether the directions issued by the PM Office and Sanchar Bhawan for stopping the purchases, were set at naught for nearly one year;

(d) whether various circles have made irregular payments as advance or annual maintenance contracts and if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the names of the companies which have benefited and whether any responsibility was fixed and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN): (a) Generally the equipment is procured annually and utilised progressively throughout the year. However, some of the equipment remained unused due to faulty equipments, obsolete technology, diversion to other units.

(b) The equipments are purchased on the forecast of the requirement and justification. Equipments are despatched to consignee only after quality testing.

(c) The directions from PM Office were issued to stop the procurement of MARR equipment. Accordingly all the suppliers were issued short closure notice of their purchase order. M/s Indian Telephone Industries Purchase Order was also short closed during the currency of original delivery schedule. Due to requirement of 128 terminals of MARR systems for Madhya Pradesh and Assam and also to fulfil contractual obligation M/s Indian Telephone Industries being a public sector